

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

250205Z May 01

2001HOCHI00632 - UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	OPIC-01	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/007W					

-----F08428 250208Z /38

FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5100
INFO AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USMISSION GENEVA
ASEAN COLLECTIVE
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
JICPAC HONOLULU HI
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HO CHI MINH CITY 000632

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV AND EAP/PD/JMARTIN
STATE ALSO FOR DRL/IRF

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CINCPAC FOR FPA
SECDEF FOR ISA/EA/LSTERN
DEPTTREAS FOR AJEWELL
USDOC FOR 4431/MAC/AP/OKSA/HPPHO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM VM RELFREE HUMANR](#)

SUBJECT: PROMINENT BUDDHIST MONK SETS DEADLINE IN SHOWDOWN WITH AUTHORITIES

REF: A. HCMC 0603 B. HANOI 1208 C. HCMC 0456

1. (U) SUMMARY: ON MAY 21, THICH QUANG DO SENT A LETTER TO GOVERNMENT LEADERS IN HANOI URGING THEM TO ISSUE A DOCUMENT ALLOWING UBCV PATRIARCH THICH HUYEN QUANG TO RETURN TO HCMC. IN THE LETTER, DO SAID THAT IF THE DOCUMENT WAS NOT ISSUED BY JUNE 7, HE WOULD GO TO QUANG NGAI PROVINCE (WHERE QUANG IS BEING HELD UNDER CONDITIONS RESEMBLING HOUSE ARREST) AT THE HEAD OF AN UNAUTHORIZED UBCV DELEGATION TO BRING QUANG BACK TO HCMC. ALSO ON MAY 21, DO REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH A SUMMONS TO APPEAR BEFORE A DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE. HE HAD RESPONDED TO AN EARLIER SUMMONS ON MAY 18. AT THAT MEETING, THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE HAD WARNED HIM STRONGLY NOT TO CARRY THROUGH WITH HIS PLANS TO GO TO QUANG NGAI (REF A.) END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THICH QUANG DO SENT A LETTER TO GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON MARCH 29, URGING THAT THEY ISSUE AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT THAT WOULD ALLOW THICH HUYEN QUANG TO RETURN TO HCMC. (QUANG HAS RESIDED AT A PAGODA IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE SINCE 1982 AND IS RESTRICTED FROM TRAVELING ELSEWHERE.)

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IN HIS LETTER, DO NOTED THAT QUANG, WHO IS 83 YEARS OLD, IS IN DETERIORATING HEALTH. HE ALSO NOTED THAT IN 1997, POLICE IN QUANG NGAI READ TO QUANG A DECISION THAT HIS OFFICIAL TERM OF ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION HAD CONCLUDED. (NOTE: THE POLICE WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, GIVE HIM A COPY OF THAT DOCUMENT, AND SEVERAL DAYS LATER THEY RETURNED WITH FORMS FOR HIM TO REGISTER HIS RESIDENCE IN QUANG NGAI AS HIS OFFICIAL PERMANENT RESIDENCE. QUANG REFUSED TO SIGN THOSE FORMS. END NOTE.) BECAUSE OF THAT, ACCORDING TO DO, THERE IS NO LEGAL BASIS FOR QUANG'S CONTINUED DETENTION IN QUANG NGAI. DO SAID THAT IF HE RECEIVED NO REPLY TO HIS LETTER BY JUNE, HE WOULD GO HIMSELF TO QUANG NGAI TO BRING QUANG BACK TO HO CHI MINH CITY.

3. (SBU) ON MAY 15, ANOTHER UBCV CONTACT TOLD POLOFF THAT QUANG'S HEALTH WAS INDEED DETERIORATING. HE SAID THAT PERSONS IN GOVERNMENT BOTH IN HANOI AND HCMC ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE VIETNAM SHOULD QUANG PASS AWAY WHILE IN DETENTION IN QUANG

NGAI. ACCORDING TO THIS CONTACT, SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE QUANG RETURNED TO HCMC AS LONG AS HE RETURNED "QUIETLY." THIS CONTACT SAID THE PROBLEM WAS THAT QUANG REFUSED TO GO TO HCMC WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT ALLOWING HIM TO GO. BUT THE GOVERNMENT IS HARD-PRESSED TO ISSUE AN OFFICIAL RELEASE DOCUMENT SINCE HE WAS NEVER OFFICIALLY CHARGED WITH OR TRIED FOR ANY CRIME.

14. (U) A MAY 16 PRESS RELEASE BY THE PARIS-BASED UBCV INFORMATION SERVICE REPORTED THAT SECURITY POLICE IN QUANG NGAI ENTERED QUANG'S PAGODA IN APRIL AND TOLD HIM THAT
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"THE CIA IS GOING TO ASSASSINATE YOU." A FEW DAYS LATER ON APRIL 15, THE POLICE TOLD HIM THAT IF HE WISHED TO BE RELEASED TO GO BACK TO HCMC, HE MUST FILE AN APPLICATION TO THE HCMC POLICE WHO ARRESTED HIM IN 1982. ACCORDING TO THE LETTER, QUANG RESPONDED IN A LETTER SAYING, "I REFUSE TO FILE A REQUEST TO THE SAIGON POLICE, FOR I HAVE COMMITTED NO CRIME AND WILL ASK NO FAVORS." (THICH QUANG DO TOLD POLOFF IN A PHONE CONVERSATION MAY 18 THAT QUANG'S REFUSAL TO APPLY FOR OFFICIAL PERMISSION TO GO TO HCMC DOES NOT MEAN HE WOULD REFUSE TO RETURN TO HCMC WITHOUT PERMISSION.)

15. (SBU) AS REPORTED IN REF A, THE DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE WHERE THICH QUANG DO RESIDES IN HCMC CALLED HIM IN ON MAY 18 AND ISSUED A STERN WARNING FOR HIM NOT TO GO TO QUANG NGAI. AFTER TWO HOURS OF DISCUSSIONS, THEY ALLOWED HIM TO RETURN TO HIS PAGODA, BUT TOLD HIM THEY WOULD SUMMON HIM AGAIN TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSIONS. ON MAY 21, DO IGNORED A SUMMONS TO RETURN TO THE DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE. HE THEN ISSUED ANOTHER LETTER PUBLICLY SETTING A DEADLINE, JUNE 7, FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO OFFICIALLY ALLOW QUANG'S RETURN TO HCMC.

COMMENT

16. (SBU) BASED ON THE UBCV CONTACT'S STATEMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 3 AND ON THE QUANG NGAI POLICE'S OWN STATEMENTS ON APRIL 15, IT APPEARS THAT THERE MIGHT BE THE SMALLEST GLIMMER OF AN OPPORTUNITY FOR QUANG TO RETURN TO HCMC "QUIETLY." OTHER INDICATIONS, SUCH AS THE WARNING FROM THE DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE WHERE DO RESIDES, THE OUTRAGEOUS ASSERTION OF A CIA ASSASSINATION THREAT, AND PARTICULARLY DO'S PUBLICLY SETTING A DATE FOR A SHOWDOWN, MAKE CERTAIN THAT OPPORTUNITY IS TENUOUS AT BEST.

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